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IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education), 3 (2), 2016, 208-234

EFL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE AND EXPECTATION TOWARDS PEER RESPONSE IN WRITING CLASSROOM

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Received: 23th September 2016; Revised: 22th November 2016; Accepted: 28th Desember 2016

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the EFL students' performance and expectation towards peer response in writing classroom. A survey research method was applied. Data were collected through a questionnaire containing 20 items. The questionnaire was distributed to 12 Indonesian EFL students enrolling in a writing course at the English Department of IAIN (State Islamic Institute) Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The findings of the study showed that the tendencies of the tasks performed by the student reviewers are asking about peers' ideas and meanings of their essays, of the student-writers responses to peer response are paying attention to clear correction and correcting mechanical errors, and of the student-writers expectations from the peer response are commenting on ideas and meanings, providing clear corrections, and correcting mechanical errors.

Key Words: EFL students; peer response; student-reviewers performance; student-writers response; student-writers expectation

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji performa dan harapan mahasiswa dalam konteks EFL terhadap respon teman sejawatnya dalam kelas menulis. Metode penelitian survey diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner dengan 20 pertanyaan. Kuesioner ini diberikan kepada 12 mahasiswa EFL di Indonesia pada kelas menulis Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris IAIN (Institut Agama Islam Negeri) Palangka Raya, Kalimantan Tengah, Indonesia. Sebagai hasil dari penelitian, terlihat bahwa kecenderungan tugas yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswa sebagai penyunting adalah bertanya tentang ide-ide dan makna dari esai teman sejawatnya, kecenderungan tanggapan dari mahasiswa sebagai penulis terhadap respon teman sejawat adalah memperhatikan koreksi yang jelas dan mengoreksi kesalahan mekanik, dan kecenderungan harapan mahasiswa sebagai penulis terhadap respon teman sejawat yaitu mengomentari ide dan makna, memberikan koreksi yang jelas, dan juga mengoreksi kesalahan mekanik dari esai teman sejawatnya.

Kata Kunci: Mahasiswa EFL; respon teman sejawat; performa mahasiswa penyunting; respon mahasiswa penulis; harapan mahasiswa penulis

How to Cite: Miftah, M., Z. (2016). EFL Students' Performance and Expectation Towards Peer Response in Writing Classroom. *IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education)*, 3(2), 208-223 doi:10.15408/ijee.v3i2.5513.

Permalink/DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v3i2.5513>

INTRODUCTION

Writing has always been considered as an important skill in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Luchini, 2010). It inspires logical thinking, pushes students to focus on their attention, sorts out their ideas, and develops their ability to summarize, analyze and criticize. It also enhances learning by thinking in and reflecting on the target language. However, most students find it difficult to compose a text in forms of paragraph or essay because the writing process requires particular strategies of which they are mostly unaware.

While most EFL teachers are frequently puzzled by these problems in their writing classes, they cannot find a resourceful way to arouse their students' creativity and put their minds to work effectively (Rao as cited in Luchini, 2010). Given this context of the situation, many EFL teachers in Indonesia realize that writing is a problem for their students. The majority of teachers find it difficult to help their students, and sometimes, even though there has been a thorough preparation, the activities they try to use in the writing lesson do not always work well on their students' achievements of writing. Therefore, in an attempt to introduce approaches and classroom

activities that promote language learning, typically writing skills, writing teachers employ many different approaches and techniques. One such technique is the use of peer response in the writing instruction.

Bell (1991) pointed out that current composition theory supports the use of peer response focusing on the writing process more than the written product. It has created the process approach to teaching writing. The process approach itself benefits students greatly for the development of their writing. As confirmed by a research on the implementation of the process approach in writing classroom, it is revealed that the process writing approach with proper model procedures could enhance students' writing skills (Miftah, 2015). Additionally, in response to the impact of collaborative learning theory and a shift in the teaching of writing with an emphasis on the product to an emphasis on process, peer response has gained its popularity in writing classes (Nelson & Murphy as cited in Widiati, 2003). Thus, peer response is supported by several theoretical frameworks, including process writing and collaborative learning.

According to Mangelsdorf (1992), peer response technique is sometimes called peer editing, peer

evaluation or peer review. In this activity, students do more than editing, evaluating or reviewing students' essays. They are responding to *what* the essay says as well as *how* it says it. For beginning EFL students, peer response sessions usually consist of a group of three or four students reading or listening to a peer's draft and commenting on what they found most interesting, what they wanted to know more about, where they were confused, and so on—the types of response that naturally emerge from a discussion of writer's ideas. Therefore, the student writers use the peers' feedback or responses to decide how to revise their drafts.

About a process of reviewing, Flower and Hayes as cited in Hapsari (2015) suggested that a review process through peer response activities, for instance, is not the final activity of a writing process. The review process may bring the writers to the new or next planning or pour their ideas into written text. Thus, a review process in peer response activities does not take place only once, but it can take several times leading the student writers to produce better writings.

Mangelsdorf (1992) added that at beginner and advanced levels of instruction, students can use a worksheet or peer response sheet to

answer questions concerning the draft's thesis, unity, development, focus, and so forth—whatever teacher wants to emphasize for that particular focus of lesson—as detailed as possible. Thus, after students complete the peer response sheet for a peer's draft, they then discuss with their peers the suggestions they made for revision.

Furthermore, Stevens and Levi (2005) indicated that peer response or feedback is most effective when given as soon as the student writers complete their drafts in order to help them make positive changes in their subsequent work in the writing process. However, once the peer response process is underway, the writers' perception of the value of the enterprise is likely to change if they begin to receive useful feedback (Rollinson, 2005). For this to happen, however, the writing course has to be set up properly with the prior plan of grouping—peer group response and its procedure.

Referring the advantage of peer response in writing class, Mittan as cited in Mangelsdorf (1992) pointed out that peer response can provide students with an authentic audience, increase their motivation for writing, enable students to receive different views of their writings, help students learn to critically read their own writings, and assist students in gaining confidence in

their writings, and, by discussions, it allows students to use oral language skills. In short, peer response has the potential to be a powerful learning tool or technique.

The use of peer response or feedback is one means of making the function of assessments formative (Askew, 2000). Moreover, Sadler as cited in Askew (2000, p. 21) asserts that if peer response feedback does not have a formative effect on learning, then it is not true feedback. In this context, the formative effect on learning means that the student writers' learning process using peer response is formed into a more developed process of writing typically in the revising and editing stages. To sum up, as writing teachers have begun to recognize the need to provide support for students at each stage of the writing process, the use of peer response has become increasingly popular.

Dealing with peer response used in the writing process, Salih (2013,) indicated that peer response has been regarded an essential feedback delivery system in a process-based second language (L2) writing classroom. The essence of collaborative process-based writing is the creation of instances of feedback by peers. Indeed, peer response provides an opportunity for peers to develop criteria for evaluation

and to practice giving their own written feedback and that of others.

Peer response can be implemented with the integrated ways through online activities such as Facebook (Miftah, 2014) and blogging activities (Miftah, 2016). The findings showed that peer response via Facebook could be implemented in writing class (Miftah, 2014). Other findings reported that blogging activities could promote students' writing abilities in which the activity using weblogs was combined with face-to-face learning mode with writing instruction implementing the process writing approach and peer response (Miftah, 2016).

Many studies have been conducted to investigate peer response in ESL/EFL writing classroom. Some studies reported on investigating the value of peer response in writing class (Mangelsdorf, 1992; Tang & Tithecott, 1999). Other studies revealed that peer response gave positive impacts on writing skill (Wakabayashi, 2008; Al-Jamal, 2009; Farrah, 2012; Jahin, 2012). Next studies were investigating the quality, types, and focus on peer response on L2 writing process (Ting & Qian, 2010; Salih, 2013). Meanwhile, in the Indonesian EFL context, some studies had been successfully investigated peer response in the

teaching of writing (Widiati, 2003; Mubarak, 2009; Miftah, 2014; Miftah, 2015). However, studies on peer response need further exploration, specifically in the context of EFL writing teaching.

In the Indonesian EFL writing classroom, particularly in English Department of IAIN (State Islamic Institute) Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, peer response needs investigation. There are still questions regarding what students' do in peer response and what they hope from peer response. The suitability between peer response and the student-writer expectation is also the concerns of this paper. Therefore, it is very much necessary to do a research investigating EFL students' performance in and expectation of peer response in writing classroom, more specifically investigating the tasks performed by the student reviewers, the student-writers response to peer response, and the student-writers expectation to peer response.

This current study is thus conducted to provide proof of the implementation of peer response related to the students' performance in and expectation of peer response in EFL writing classroom. This article reports results of a survey which is part of a broader case study on peer response in

an Indonesian EFL writing class (Miftah, 2015). Therefore, specifically, this research tries to investigate the following set of questions: (1) How do the EFL students' perform in a peer response activity?. (2) What do the EFL students expect from a peer response?.

METHOD

In order to explore the performance and expectation of the EFL students towards peer response in writing classroom, a survey research method was applied. The questionnaire was distributed to 12 Indonesian EFL students who enrolled in the class of Writing III Course, particularly in the English Department of IAIN (State Islamic Institute) Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The number of participants was chosen under the consideration that they get involved in the peer response activities led by the teacher in the writing classroom-Writing III course. Therefore, all students were selected to be the participants or the population sample of the study.

To collect the data, a questionnaire with closed-ended questions was distributed to the participants. The steps were that preparing the questionnaire, giving the questionnaire to the participants,

collecting the responses, calculating the result of responses, analyzing the data obtained, and finally concluding the results by referring to the objective of the study. The data-gathering through questionnaire is done by asking the students rather than by observing and sampling their behavior (Tuckman, 1999).

A questionnaire containing 20 items adapted from a similar research was used for data collection. The questionnaire was completed by the students in about 15 minutes. Of the 20 items, 7 items asked the kinds of tasks performed by student reviewers, 6 items pertained to how student-writers response to peer response, and 7 items investigated what student-writers expect from peer response. Each question item has five possible responses - strongly agree (SA), agree (A), uncertain (U), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). The informants were told to choose the items they preferred by giving a check mark (✓) in the box. Selecting a particular option by a respondent determines the degree of agreement or disagreement, and thus reveals how the respondents perceive the issue the statements discussed. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants after they had completed the peer response activities in the

writing classroom, and this was later collected for further analysis.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage. They were counted into percentage and coded to classify the EFL students' performance in and expectation of peer response in writing classroom. As suggested by McKay (2008), in a survey research, coding strategy is the first thing to do. Data were categorized into three categories by calculating questionnaire frequency count and percentage equivalent. They were the student-reviewers questionnaire frequency count and percentage equivalent, the questionnaire frequency count of the student-writers response to peer response and percentage equivalent, and the questionnaire frequency count of the student-writers expectation from peer response and percentage equivalent.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the questionnaire showed interesting findings. To discuss the data more specifically, data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed and displayed separately.

The EFL Students' Performance in Peer Response

Tasks Performed by the Student Reviewers

Table 1 shows the student-reviewers questionnaire frequency count and percentage equivalent. It shows the respondents' score on tasks reviewers that had to do with the peer response activities.

It shows that in responding to item (1), 25% of the participant strongly agreed and 75% agreed that they asked student writers about their ideas and meanings of their essays. The result reveals that all of the reviewers asked the writers for clarification regarding the ideas and meanings of their essays.

Item (2) in the questionnaire was about the students focus when they evaluated their peers' drafts. The students were asked about if they focused on grammar accuracy

correction as the main area in the peer response activities. The analysis showed that 50% strongly agreed and 42% agreed that they mainly focused on grammatical errors in the peers' drafts. On the other hand, 8% of the participants expressed uncertainty about their stand. It indicates that most of the reviewers mainly focused on grammar accuracy correction.

The analysis of item (3) in the questionnaire revealed that 17% of the students strongly agreed and 75% agreed that they commented on their peers' ideas and meanings and extend them as well. On the other hand, 8% of the respondents remained uncertain about their contribution to the writers' ideas development. It is said that the reviewers mostly commented on their peers' ideas and meanings and extend them as well.

Table 1: Tasks Performed by the Student Reviewers

Statement	Frequency (Percentages)			
	SA	A	U	D SD
1) I ask about peers' ideas and meanings of their essays.	3 (25%)	9 (75%)		
2) My review focuses on grammar accuracy.	6 (50%)	5 (42%)	1 (8%)	
3) I give comment on peers' ideas and meanings and extend them.	2 (17%)	9 (75%)	1 (8%)	
4) I provide a set of clear correction by giving symbols.	5 (42%)	5 (42%)	2 (17%)	
5) I evaluate peers' vocabulary use and suggest corrections.	3 (25%)	7 (58%)	2 (17%)	
6) I evaluate peers' essay structure.	4 (33%)	6 (50%)	2 (17%)	
7) I give correction for mechanical errors.	4 (33%)	7 (58%)	1 (8%)	

SA: strongly agree; A: agree; U: undecided; D: disagree; SD: strongly disagree

Item (4) in the questionnaire explored the participants' perceptions about the clarity of their response to peers' writing and ideas. The results showed that 42% strongly agreed and 42% agreed that they provided a set of clear corrections by giving review symbols to peer's drafts. For the same task, 17% of the participants answered uncertain about their correction and review symbols to the drafts. It means that majority of the reviewers provided a set of clear corrections by giving review symbols to peer's drafts. This result suggests that the students have developed a positive attitude toward peer response activities.

The table also reveals that 25% of the participants strongly agreed and 58% agreed that they evaluated peers' vocabulary use and suggested the corrections while 17% were uncertain with a focus on vocabulary (item 5). Additionally, the table shows that in responding to item (6) 33% of the respondents strongly agreed and 50% agreed that they evaluated their peers' essay structure. On the other hand, 17% of the students expressed uncertainty about their evaluation to their peers' essay structure.

The analysis of item (7) of the questionnaire also showed that 33% of the participants strongly agreed and

58% agreed that they focused on correction of mechanical errors in the peer response activity, while 8% was found uncertain.

In short, from overall results, as indicated in Table 1, it was obvious that most participants had positive contribution to the peer response activities. Most the student reviewers showed a positive statement of each item towards peer response, particularly related to the advice or review on ideas and meanings of an essay, grammar accuracy, way of giving correction, vocabulary use, essay organization, and correction for a mechanic. Such finding is similar to the research finding of the former study conducted by Salih (2013). The findings of the former study revealed that the feedback providers' tendency and focus when reviewing peer drafts were in the areas of above items.

However, the kinds of tasks that the student reviewers tend to do were asking about peers' ideas and meanings of their essays. It is indicated from the total of the student-reviewers questionnaire frequency count and percentage equivalent from strongly agreed (SA) and agreed (A) to item (1), totally 100% (n=12).

The Student-Writers Response to Peer Response

Table 2 shows the questionnaire frequency count of the student-writers response to peer response and its percentage equivalent. It indicates the respondents' score on the writer response to peer response on essay drafts.

The analysis of the questionnaire has also focused on specific areas of writer response to peer response: rereading the ideas and meanings of an essay, correcting grammatical errors, paying attention to a set of clear correction and review symbols, checking and revising vocabulary use, reorganizing essay structure, and correcting mechanical errors (items 8-13).

Item (8) was designed to look into the student writers' response to peer response on ideas and meaning. It is found that 25% of the participants strongly agreed and 50% agreed that they reread their ideas and meanings of an essay. There were, however, 25% of the students who chose 'uncertain'. This result indicates evidence of the tendency of the student writers to revise their ideas of an essay evaluated by peers.

Moreover, in responding to item (9) about the grammar, most students

paid great attention to grammar correction as there were 33% of participants who strongly agreed and 58% who agreed that they corrected their grammatical errors in accordance to the peer response. There were, however, 8% of the participants who chose 'uncertain'. This result reveals that the respondents' tendency to place grammar an important aspect in their essays.

Meanwhile, responding to item (10) about attention to correction symbols, all students gave great care. There were 33% of the students who strongly agreed and 67% who agreed that they paid attention to a set of clear corrections and revised their writing accordingly. This finding indicates the importance of response clarity.

Additionally, item (11) was designed to explore student writers' response to peer response regarding the vocabulary use. There were 17% of respondents who strongly agreed and 50% who agreed that they checked and revised their vocabulary use. On the other hand, 8% of respondents chose uncertain regarding the questionnaire statement. This result really indicates the student writers' attention to the peers' evaluation about the use of vocabulary.

Table 2: The Student-Writers Response to Peer Response

Statement	Frequency (Percentages)				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
8) I reread and revise ideas and meanings of my essay.	3 (25%)	6 (50%)	3 (25%)		
9) I correct the grammatical errors of my essay.	4 (33%)	7 (58%)	1 (8%)		
10) I pay attention to a set of clear corrections and to the symbol and revise my essay.	4 (33%)	8 (67%)			
11) I check vocabulary use and revise it.	2 (17%)	9 (75%)	1 (8%)		
12) I reorganize the ideas of my essay.	3 (25%)	7 (58%)	2 (17%)		
13) I correct mechanical errors.	4 (33%)	8 (67%)			

SA: strongly agree; A: agree; U: undecided; D: disagree; SD: strongly disagree

In responding to item (12), 25% of the students strongly agreed and 75% of them agreed that they reorganized ideas in the essay drafts after peer response activities. There were, however, 17% of the students who chose uncertain about the statement. The finding tells that the student-writers were willing to reorganize their idea after according to the given feedback.

Next, item (13) investigated the student writers' response to peer response regarding the mechanical features. There were 33% of the participants who strongly agreed and 67% of them who agreed that the student writers corrected their mechanical errors such as spelling, punctuation, etc. The result shows that the writers were willing to correct their mechanical errors such as spelling, punctuation, etc.

To summarize, based on the findings indicated in Table 2, it was obviously showed that the majority of respondents or the student-writers positively responded to peers' feedback of their writings. Even though they gave a high response in the areas of peer feedback for their drafts as revealed in each item, there was a tendency of the student writers to responses to peer response by following the clear correction suggestions and correcting mechanical errors. It is indicated from the total of the questionnaire frequency count of the student-writers response to peer response and percentage equivalent from strongly agreed (SA) and agreed (A) to items (10) and (13), totally 100% (n=12). The finding clarifies Ting and Qian (2010, p. 95) result that both grammar and mechanics were the most frequently revised elements that can

contribute to improving the students' essays in terms of fluency and accuracy.

The EFL Students' Expectation from Peer Response

Table 3 shows the questionnaire frequency count of what student-writers expect from the peer response and its percentage equivalent. It presents the respondents' score on the writer expectation to peer response on essay drafts.

The analysis of the questionnaire has also focused on specific areas expected by the student writers to be evaluated by reviewers in terms of clarification of ideas and meanings of an essay, grammatical correctness, ideas

development, provision of clear correction and review symbols, vocabulary use, essay organization, and mechanical corrections (items 14-20).

Item (14) was designed to look into the student writers' expectancy from peer response outcomes on ideas and meaning. Two students (17%) strongly agreed and nine students (75%) agreed that they expected peers to ask them about their ideas and their meanings of an essay. There was, however, one student (8%) who chose 'uncertain'. This result reveals more evidence of the tendency of the student writers to have their ideas of an essay evaluated by peers.

Table 3: The Student-Writers Expectation to Peer Response

Statement	Frequency (Percentages)				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
14) I expect my peer reviewer to ask me about ideas and meanings of my essay.	2 (17%)	9 (75%)	1 (8%)		
15) I expect my peer reviewer to correct the grammatical errors in my essay.	3 (25%)	8 (67%)	1 (8%)		
16) I expect my peer reviewer to give comment on ideas and meanings, and extend them.	6 (50%)	6 (50%)			
17) I expect my peer reviewer to provide a set of clear corrections by giving symbols.	4 (33%)	8 (67%)			
18) I expect my peer reviewer to evaluate vocabulary and give corrections.	5 (42%)	6 (50%)	1 (8%)		
19) I expect my peer reviewer to evaluate the way to organize ideas of my essay.	2 (17%)	9 (75%)	1 (8%)		
20) I expect my peer reviewer to give correction for mechanical errors.	4 (33%)	8 (67%)			

SA: strongly agree; A: agree; U: undecided; D: disagree; SD: strongly disagree

Furthermore, in responding to item (15) about the importance of grammar, all participants gave grammar great attention. Three students (25%) strongly agreed and eight students (67%) agreed that peers should correct their grammar. There was, however, one student (8%) who chose 'uncertain'. This result reveals that the respondents' tendency to place grammar an important aspect in their essays. It is worth mentioning here that during the interview, many of the respondents expressed their need for more response on grammar correction.

When asked about their expectancy of peer response outcome on ideas expansion and essay development of item (16), six students (50%) strongly agreed and six students (50%) agreed that ideas expansion and how to develop an essay are an important aspect to be shared with peers.

Meanwhile, responding to item (17) about the provision of setting clear correction and correction signals, all respondents give great care. Four students (33%) strongly agreed and eight students (67%) agreed that peers should provide clear correction symbols. This is very important in a sense that clear correction clues are deemed to facilitate revision and peer response incorporation. This finding

indicates the importance of feedback clarity. This finding indicates the urgent point of peer feedback and confirms the prior research investigated by Salih (2013). The prior research finding revealed when peer response is provided in an ambiguous manner, the required points of peer response incorporation might not be fulfilled.

In addition, item (18) was designed to explore the expectancy of student writers regarding their use of vocabulary items. Five participants (42%) strongly agreed and six participants (50%) agreed that peers should evaluate their choice of vocabulary and suggest corrections. On the other hand, there was one student (8%) who chose uncertain about the statement. This result indicates the student writers' willingness to share ideas with peers about the use of vocabulary.

In responding to item (19), two students (17%) strongly agreed and nine students (75%) agreed that they expected peers to evaluate the way they organized ideas in the essay drafts. There was, however, one student (8%) who chose uncertain with the statement. The respondent looked forward to suggestions on ideas organization and essay structure in peer response. It indicates that idea

development response should be received from peers.

The study also investigated (item 20) the student writers' expectation from peer response regarding the mechanical features. Four students (33%) strongly agreed and eight students (67%) agreed that they expected peers to correct their spelling, punctuation, etc. This is also important for polishing essay drafts as asserted by Oshima and Hogue (2007), the emphasis on mechanical correction is one of the aims to polish the drafts of writing.

To conclude, from overall results, it was clear that most of the respondents expected that the feedbacks tap into areas of ideas and meanings, grammar, feedback clarity, vocabulary use, ideas organization of an essay, and mechanical correction respectively.

However, the tendencies of the student-writers' expectations from the peer response are on comments on ideas and meanings, provision of clear correction, and correction on mechanical errors. It is indicated from the total of the questionnaire frequency count of the student-writers' expectation from peer response and its percentage equivalent from strongly agreed (SA) and agreed (A) to items (16), (17) and (20), totally 100% (n=12).

The findings are almost the same as Salih (2013) reported in his study, but the findings are different in giving the rank in rating. Salih (2013) reported that the student writers have selected grammar as the most important aspect needed to be evaluated by peers; giving it the first rank in rating. However, the results of the current study show that commenting on ideas and meanings, providing clear correction, and correcting mechanical errors are the prime areas of the student-writers expectation to peer response.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This current study investigated the EFL students' performance in and expectation of peer response in writing classroom. Based on the analysis of the results of the questionnaire in this survey research, it was revealed that majority of the EFL students performed and expected peer response in the areas of peer feedback as confirmed in the questionnaire items. However, there were tendencies of their performance and expectation towards peer response. First, in terms of the kind of tasks performed by the student reviewers, they tend to ask about peer' ideas and meanings of an essay. Second, there are tendencies of the student-writers responses to pay attention to clear correction and correcting mechanical

errors. Third, the student-writers expect that peer responses are commenting on ideas and meanings, providing clear correction, and correcting mechanical errors as well.

This survey research was limited only to investigate what EFL students do in a peer response activities and what they expect from this activities in a writing classroom. Therefore, the author is proposing the following suggestions. Firstly, further studies should explore other various patterns of peer response in writing classroom. Secondly, in the EFL writing teaching, teachers are recommended to encourage peer response because of its power and benefits for the students' writing skills development.

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